

**Do not hesitate to contact your Physician or
Public Health Department Nurse if you are
concerned or have questions.**

*Panhandle Health District offices
are ready to serve you in each
of the five northern counties
of Idaho*

Kootenai County

2195 Ironwood Ct
Coeur d'Alene ID 83814
208 415-5100

Bonner County

1020 Michigan
Sandpoint ID 83864
208 263-5159

Boundary County

7402 Caribou
Bonners Ferry ID 83805
208 267-5558

Benewah County

711 Jefferson
St. Maries ID 83861
208 245-4556

Shoshone County

114 W Riverside
Kellogg ID 83837
208 786-7474



Panhandle Health District 1
Healthy People in Healthy Communities
www2.state.id.us/phd1

Human Papillomavirus (HPV)



**Everything you need to know about
protecting yourself from HPV.**

This publication has been brought to you by the Panhandle Health District,
the Idaho STD/HIV program and the North Idaho Cancer Research
Education Program.

February 2005

Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases in the world. HPV is the name of a group of viruses that have more than 70 different types. It is sometimes called the wart virus. HPV can infect the outside and the inside of the vagina and the cervix (the opening of the uterus or womb) in women, and the urethra in men, as well as the anus in both. It can be seen, but sometimes NOT!

Who Gets HPV?

Men and women who are sexually active can get HPV. The virus is spread through skin contact during vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who has the virus. Three out of four Americans between the ages of 15 and 49 have been infected with genital HPV in their lifetime. 28% of the women will go on to develop cervical disease.

What Does HPV Look Like?

Growths or bumps can appear on the vulva, on or around the vagina or anus. On a male, HPV can appear on the penis, urethra, scrotum or upper leg. HPV can also be invisible.



How Would I Know If I Had HPV?

In some cases, it's difficult to know. Sometimes people do not notice HPV because it is inside the vagina, on the cervix, in the anus, or in the male urethra. In addition, they are often flesh-colored and painless. Only rarely do they cause symptoms such as itching, pain or bleeding.



Is There a Cure for HPV?

HPV is a virus and there is no treatment for the virus. Experts disagree about whether the virus goes away or is just kept in check by the immune system so much that it cannot be detected. Most people never have a problem with HPV because the immune system keeps the virus from becoming a problem.

Does HPV Cause Cancer?

A small number of these viruses have been linked to cancer of the cervix. Long-term infections with the virus increase cancer risk. Cervical cancer, in most cases, is preventable through annual Pap smears. Women should have a Pap smear once a year when they become sexually active.

How Can I Avoid Getting HPV?

Abstinence (not having sex) is the only sure way to avoid getting HPV. Plan ahead: Think about protecting yourself. Talk about sexually transmitted diseases and the need to protect yourself with your sex partner(s). Using a barrier method, such as condoms with each sex partner, may lower the chance of infection when the condom covers the infected area(s).

REMEMBER!

- Many people don't know they have HPV.
- Many people infect their partner without meaning to.
- People may not know right away that they have an HPV infection or genital warts.